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# Farm Broadcasters Letter

United States Department of Agriculture Office of Public Affairs Radio-TV Division Washington, D.C. 20250-1340 (202) 720-4330

Letter No. 2615

June 18, 1993

*Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy and Assistant Secretary for Food and Consumer Services Ellen Haas visited two sites in West Virginia to better understand government programs from a participant's perspective. They reviewed the application process for food stamps, and visited senior citizens where they discussed hunger issues. USDA photo by Byron Schumaker.*



**RURAL-URBAN CONDITIONS** -- Rural unemployment, income, and poverty rates have been relatively stable while urban conditions have dipped. Although urban declines narrowed rural-urban gaps, they did not improve the status of rural residents because they were closed by falling urban conditions. National indicators for 1993 suggest modest rural growth. Investments in manufacturing are becoming increasingly important for rural America because manufacturing now constitutes a larger proportion of the rural economy than urban. Contact: Linda Ghelfi (202) 219-0520.

**THE TREND TOWARD MARKET ORIENTATION** -- Agricultural production in the U.S. that is covered by government income support payments has declined during the span of the last two five-year farm acts. Nongovernmental supply and demand factors are becoming more important in influencing farmers' production decisions for corn, wheat, rice and upland cotton. The role of government commodity programs in influencing farmers' production decisions has declined. The share of U.S. cropland has increased on which market signals determine planting decisions, a trend toward market orientation that began with the 1985 farm act and continued with 1990 farm bill. Contact: Paul Westcott (202) 219-0313.

**WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRADE** -- U.S. trade to the Western Hemisphere nations continues to recover from increased competition, world recession, a stronger dollar, and the debt crisis in Latin American countries. In 1992 the U.S. imported \$12 billion in agricultural goods and exported nearly an equal value to the region. U.S. farm exports and imports in the Hemisphere are expected to increase slightly in 1993 as regional economies improve, keeping the trade balance steady. Contact: Miriam Stuart (202) 219-0667.

**FORMER USSR WHEAT IMPORTS** -- Wheat production for the former Soviet Union is projected to be 78.5 million tons, about 10 million tons lower than the 1992/93 estimate. Projected wheat imports for 1993/94 are 18 million tons, 1.5 million tons higher than last year due largely to the expected decline in wheat production. Continued dryness in Eastern Europe has affected production expectations throughout the region. Poland's projected import level is up one million tons. Contact: William Liefert (202) 219-0620.

**NEAR RECORD EXPECTED** -- U.S. winter wheat production is forecast at 1.8 billion bushels, up 14 percent from the 1992 crop. Yields are expected to average 41.2 bushels per acre, second only to the 1983 record high of 41.8 bushels per acre. **Contact: Ed Allen (202) 219-0840.**

**U.S. TOBACCO PRODUCTION DOWN** -- Supplies of U.S. grown leaf are expected to decline in 1993/94 because of lower production. 1993 production will fall about 5 percent from 1992's 1.72 billion pounds. Despite higher price supports, 1993/94 auction prices may show only a slight increase from last season because of greater use of imported leaf in manufacturing cigarettes and large world supplies of leaf. U.S. leaf exports may decline, but the drop will be cushioned by the shift to American blended cigarettes in a number of countries. Higher cigarette exports will more than offset lower domestic consumption. **Contact: Verner Grise (202) 219-0890.**

**NONCHEMICAL CONTROL** -- Nearly every peach orchard in Georgia and South Carolina is infested with ring nematode, a tiny underground worm that feeds on and destroys peach tree roots. In South Carolina alone, 1.5 million trees died of the nematodes between 1980 and 1990. Chemical control is available, but the nematicides are expensive and may not be available much longer because of environmental concerns. USDA scientists have found that planting a variety of wheat known as Stacy can significantly reduce the number of nematodes on sites previously planted to peaches and heavily infested with the pest. Test plots showed the wheat having a level of control equal to fumigation. **Contact: Andrew Nyczepir (912) 956-5656.**

**IRRADIATION COULD EXPAND POULTRY EXPORTS** -- Indonesia is enforcing a zero-tolerance standard for Salmonella on poultry, which has largely excluded U.S. exports to that growing market. Greece has also insisted that chicken be free of Salmonella. Swedish companies are selling chicken with "Salmonella free" labels. France is using high-energy electrons to reduce Salmonella in poultry products. U.S. researchers have found that irradiating chicken kills 93 percent of Salmonella on chicken. Irradiation kills other pathogens that sometimes contaminate chicken, such as Listeria and Campylobacter. The ability of U.S. producers to offer irradiated poultry could open new markets. **Contact: Tanya Roberts (202) 219-0864.**

**CORN SEED IMPORTS** -- USDA is proposing to allow seed of Indian corn from New Zealand into the United States from New Zealand. "Seed corn imports from New Zealand would provide U.S. industries with a winter generation of corn seed for research and development purposes," says Glen Lee, deputy administrator of plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Protection Service. USDA studies indicate that injurious diseases of corn are either not present in New Zealand or would not be spread by corn seed. **Contact: Roberta McCorckle (301) 436-7280.**

**QUESTION** -- Which is highest in calories and which is next highest: sugar, potatoes, butter or alcohol? A recent survey showed that only 1 in 10 respondents could correctly identify butter as having the most calories, with alcohol next. Many people associate starchy foods as being fattening. Beth Reames, Extension nutritionist at Louisiana State University Agricultural Center recommends building a lower-fat diet around carbohydrate foods such as breads, rice, cereals, pastas, fruits and vegetables. Reames says eating a variety of foods in moderation, cutting fat intake and increasing exercise are changes that will lead to a healthier weight. **Contact: Beath Reames (504) 388-6701.**



## FROM OUR RADIO SERVICE

**AGRICULTURE USA #1880** -- Jim Henry talks with a real life "Medicine Man" who is committed to preserving the vast pharmacological storehouse called the rain forest. (Weekly reel -- 13-1/2 minute documentary.)

**CONSUMER TIME #1362** -- Retirement and estate planning; breakfast and kids; caving for research; quality herbs; the cutting board controversy. (Weekly reel of 2-1/2 to 3 minute consumer features.)

**AGRITAPE NEWS & FEATURES #1872** -- USDA News Highlights; 1993 signup results; new data on farm income; saving a blueberry crop; aquaculture & hydroponics -- a marriage of convenience. (Weekly reel of news features.)

**NEWS FEATURE FIVE #1625** -- Preserving the rain forest; cataloging the rain forest; threatened medicinal plants; renewable taxol; worm-killing wheat. (Weekly reel of research feature stories.)

**UPCOMING ON USDA RADIO NEWSLINE** -- Wednesday, June 23, dairy outlook; Friday, June 25, livestock/poultry update, ag chemical use; Monday, June 28, industrial use of ag materials outlook; Tuesday, June 29, crop/weather update, ag prices; Wednesday, June 30, acreage planted, grain stocks, China outlook, world coffee, world tobacco, world dairy situation. These are the **USDA reports we know about in advance**. Our Newsline carries many stories every day which are not listed in this lineup. Please don't let the lack of a story listing keep you from calling.

**USDA RADIO NEWSLINE (202) 488-8358 or 8359, COMREX ENCODED (202) 720-2545.**  
*Material changed at 5 p.m., EDT, each working day.*

## FROM OUR TELEVISION SERVICE

**FEATURES** -- Lynn Wyvill reports on Vitamin C and health; Patrick O'Leary reports on a new marsh grass to control shoreline erosion.

**ACTUALITIES** -- Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy participates at the National Hunger Forum in Washington, D.C.; USDA meteorologist Bob Stefanski on U.S. weather and crop conditions; USDA economist Bob McElroy on agricultural income; USDA outlook chairman James Donald on crop production estimates.

**UPCOMING FEATURES** -- Lynn Wyvill reports on summertime food safety tips; DeBoria Janifer reports on "hi-tech" rice; Patrick O'Leary reports on the top ten farm exporting states.

**EVERY OTHER WEEK** -- Agriculture Update with anchors Eric Parsons and Lori Spiczka. 4:30 of USDA farm program information in news desk format with B-roll.

*Available on Satellite Galaxy 6, channel 23, audio 6.2 or 6.8, downlink frequency 4160 MHz.: Thursdays from 7:30 - 7:45 p.m., EDT, Saturdays from 10 - 10:30 a.m., EDT, and Mondays from 8 - 8:30 a.m., EDT.*  
**OFFMIKE**

**ALFALFA CROP LOSS**...is putting pressure on hay prices, says **John Everly** (KDTH, Dubuque, IA). Wet, heavy snow followed by freezing temperatures last winter killed much of the alfalfa crop in the tri-corner area of Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois. John says there is concern whether the region will have enough high quality hay reserves for dairy farmers. During the month of June he is broadcasting live from a number of Dairy Breakfasts held through his area.

**MAJOR DAMAGE**...resulted from tornadoes hitting south central Nebraska, says **Joe Gangwish** (KMMJ, Grand Island, NE). Early estimates total one million dollars to homes in cities. In rural areas buildings were destroyed, cattle killed and crops damaged. Corn was just emerging, and the hail and extensive flooding caused losses.

**THE GREELEY INDEPENDENCE STAMPEDE**...is the world's largest 4th of July Rodeo, says **Tom Riter** (KFKA, Greeley, CO). Tom will broadcast live from the event, June 23 to July 4. Tom says the moisture condition is excellent for vegetable growers, little irrigation will be needed this year.

### ***Farm Broadcasters Letter***



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Radio-TV Division  
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**HIGH LEVEL**...of the Mississippi River has caused seepage through the dikes and onto fields, delaying cotton planting in many areas, says **Chris Kimbell** (KNOE Radio-TV, Monroe, LA). Congratulations to Chris. The TV station doubled his morning airtime, and in a recent survey asking farmers where they got their agricultural news, 83 percent said Chris' TV program.

**RETIRED**...**Eddie Gale** (WGIL/WAAG, Galesburg, IL).

**CONGRATULATIONS**...to **Gary Crawford** (USDA Radio, Washington, D.C.). He won a silver medal in the educational category at the New York Festivals International Radio Competition for his program "Pickles Are Funny," a feature produced for the Consumer Time series in our weekly cassette service. ...and to **Pat O'Leary** (USDA TV, Washington, D.C.). His program "Managing Our National Forests," produced for USDA's Forest Service, won second prize in the informative and prestige films category at the 20th annual Ecofilm Festival in Ostrava, Czech Republic.

**VIC POWELL**  
Chief, Radio & TV Division